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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD DISTRIBUTION ADMINISTRATION

"FOOD FOR RESTAURANTS FROM NOW ON"

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Address, Ohio State Restaurant Association "Emergency Conference"  
at Neil House, Columbus, Ohio, April 8, 1943.

You have been through a lot of rationing. You will probably go through more. You want to know whether things are going to get tougher or easier and to what extent. Remember there is no superabundance of any food. Some food is less scarce than others. Meats are very scarce, so that the Nation will have to get an increasing proportion of its nutrients from dairy products and vegetable proteins, peas, beans, soybeans.

Roughly one-half of the money you spend for food is now for rationed items: sugar, coffee, cheese, meats, butter, fats and processed foods. Merely shifting from rationed foods to unrationed foods is not the solution. This would probably bring about national or certainly local shortages in the unrationed items and might hasten further rationing.

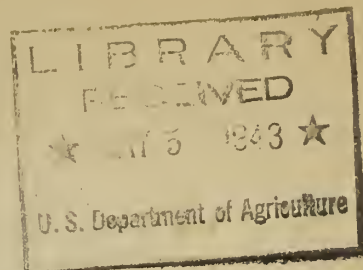
So in making your plans to conserve food don't think in terms of rationed or unrationed food, think in terms of all food.

You have just been hit by meat rationing and know that the most optimistic picture you can expect would still be a 25 per cent reduction from your December consumption. You are wondering if it is going to get any better. It isn't. Regional adjustments might be made or possibly adjustments in special cases but the over all supply will not increase. Any increased quantity you may get as individual operators, you are going to get because it has been taken from somebody else.

You may be assured that meats for the Nation as a whole will not be available in any greater amounts than now. We have just so much meat to go around. We know that the last 3 years have been years of abundance in meat production, and in those years we became accustomed to large quantities of meat. But the large supply must now be allocated among several claimant groups -- first, the armed forces; second, civilians; and third, territorial possessions and lend-lease.

Roughly, one-third of our total production of red meats (beef, veal, lamb, pork, and mutton) will go this year to meet government requirements, mostly of our armed forces.

If any of you have the idea that this country's supply of meat is being tapped needlessly to help some other nation, please remember these facts. Less than 6 percent of our meat supply went for lend-lease in



and New Zealand contributed more beef and veal to our troops under reciprocal lend-lease than we sent abroad to our Allies all last year. Also every bit of exportable Argentine beef is going to other United Nations in order to meet needs a lot greater than our own.

Your December reduction is not as tough as it seems at first glance because in that month restaurants generally did more business than in any month in recent years, and far above normal. The war has produced hardships in the restaurant business as it has in other businesses, but we all know there are some compensations. The volume of restaurant business is now probably at its highest point in the history of the Nation.

The next item on the entree list is fish. We can expect that at least the fish picture will not get worse but probably better because the Navy is turning back to operators some of the boats that had been called to special work. Places that were not fished last year will be this year. But again we have the distribution problem: that is, some areas may have shortages and some may have an abundant supply because fish is unrationed. There will be more canned and processed fish but this increase will have little effect on civilian consumption since these items are needed for export.

Poultry will show a substantial increase and the hope is that it will relieve some of the pressure on demand for meats. But the chances are the increase will not be felt to any appreciable extent in urban areas because it will probably be absorbed on farms and near the points of production since poultry is not yet rationed. The poultry situation is probably less acute than that of any other entree item. Again because it is an unrationed food, the distribution problem may produce acute disturbances in some localities. If all the restaurants suddenly shifted to poultry items, it is quite likely that there would be local shortages.

The consumption of eggs generally will be slightly more than last year but generally it will be less for the cities because the increased consumption will be in the area of production.

This takes care of the major entree items: Meats, Fish, Poultry, Eggs.

On dairy products the tendency is to allow the consumption of fluid milk to increase so that the consumer may get in that form the calcium and riboflavin necessary to an adequate diet. In 1942 seventy-five percent of the calcium and fifty percent of the riboflavin of our total diet were in milk, and both of these came from the solids, not the fat. It is better that milk be used and consumed in its natural form and that it move directly from the cow to the consumer. The natural fluid milk is the most direct and economical way of bringing essential nutrients to the consumer. It can be expected that the supply of fluid milk, though tight in some areas, for the Nation as



a whole will be as good as it has been.

The production of heavy cream already has been curtailed. Whatever plans you are now making, think in terms of using less cream. Get away from using any cream, if possible, or at least plan to use decreasing amounts of it. The point I am making is this, because of these plans for the use of more milk in its natural form you will be required to use less cream.

In case it occurs to you to use dried milk, think over this fact. At the present time the Nation is 200,000,000 pounds short of what is considered necessary to meet war needs plus a limited demand here at home.

As the tendency will be to increase the consumption of fluid milk, there is little chance of an increase in butter or other dairy products. So, under rationing, your cut from your December figures probably will represent the best picture you can expect. If there is any change at all it will probably be downward because in these products the present civilian per capita consumption has been arrived at by reducing lend-lease commitments and if there is any unforeseen increase it will most likely to go lend-lease. The situation on fats and oils also will show no improvement and with the feed and meat situation tightening, the chances are that hogs will be sent to market at lighter weights so that less lard will be available.

On processed fruits and vegetables, no improvement is anticipated although some individual and regional adjustments may be made from present allotments.

As to small fruits and vegetables it is practically impossible to make any reliable estimate, as the shift is going to be toward local production and local consumption. Restaurants will have to revise their buying to a large extent so that they buy and use local produce. Estimates are that potatoes will be available in quantities about comparable to last year.

Citrus fruit and apples in their natural form will be slightly less than last year but citrus fruit juices will be as scarce as other processed foods.

The brightest spot in the food picture is in cereals and other grain products. These are the only items that are generally in plentiful supply. If consumption can be diverted to these products it will of course relieve pressure on other foods. This might mean a change in eating habits to heavier breakfasts -- exclusive of the ham and eggs.

In summary, the supply picture is darkest on meats. It is less acute on eggs, fish and poultry. Milk in the fluid form will be used

more but butter, cream and cheese, if there is any change, will decrease.

In addition to fluid milk, more emphasis will be placed on vegetable proteins -- beans, peas, soybeans. Fresh vegetables and fruits will be used more but only if they can be obtained from fairly local sources.

Cereals and other grains are the only items of food that can be promoted for use.

This is the picture of the Nation's storeroom. It means that the consumer is going to eat less per meal at home or in the restaurant and that you will have to make each pound of food serve more people than it did in 1941 and 1942. The quantity is going to be substantially less than the rate at which you used it in December 1942. But don't forget that your figure for December was probably a third higher than the average month in 1941 and 1942.

Now, we have to figure what we are going to do about it. Our job in the Nation and industry is to conserve food. The Food Distribution Administration is interested in all foods whether rationed or not. It is interested in foods until they are consumed by the individual and on their way to national health. Programs for civilian food conservation and nutrition have been under way for some time and the restaurant division which I represent was formed to establish in Washington a clearing house for the 500,000 eating places in the country, and to inaugurate, promote and enforce food conservation and simplified practices in the restaurant industry. An objective of this Division is to enlist the Nation's restaurants, from the hot-dog stand to the swankiest hotel, in a constructive food conservation program based on the principles of eating for health. Our job is to keep you informed of the problems and by working with you try to help in finding the solutions. Your job is to apply all your ingenuity and experience in finding ways of conserving food and contributing to the Nation's health.

In the industry, food conservation has been something that you have always done as a natural function of the business. The more food you conserved, the more money you made. Such a practice did not need to be motivated by patriotism. It was just good business. This conservation has been directed toward preventing back-of-the-house waste and that function is now being given a patriotic incentive: curtailing waste helps you and helps the Nation. But conservation as we now think of it means careful planning to make the food go further. This means changes in restaurant policies. For years restaurants have devoted their attention to means of reducing waste and economizing in the back-of-the-house so that the savings there would make it possible to give additional values

to the customer. Frills and fancy gestures have been added to the service of meals, sometimes because you wanted to do it, sometimes because you were forced by competition to do it. The plates of relishes, baskets of rolls, butter bowls, extra cups of coffee, pitchers of cream and syrups, side salads, additional courses -- all these have grown up in a period of peacetime plenty. That period is definitely out.

We must now think how we can do a good job with the minimum of food and with NO FRILLS. The job that has to be done is a lot harder and requires more imagination and executive skill than the cutting down of kitchen waste because every move directly affects your customers. Unless imagination and thought is given to these policy changes so that they have a positive constructive appeal rather than a reluctant curtailment measure, you will not be doing a job for the Nation, for your patrons, or for yourself.

At times the restaurants have been criticized by the consumer for curtailment because the consumer felt that the restaurants were merely taking advantage of a situation to enhance their profits. In some cases this has been true. As an industry we know that this criticism is unjustified. Yet, we have not been entirely blameless. When we've had to curtail we've done it in a negative, defensive manner. What we should do is use our skill to devise new merchandising methods of presenting what is available.

So, you will give increasing consideration to simplified, selected menus, and the emphasis is to be placed on selected. You will feature and balance items in accordance with the Nation's storeroom -- your preparation and service facilities, and your customer requirement. You will not merely cut down on the menu but you will do a menu planning job a lot harder than any you have done before. Strangely enough, this is just good restaurant practice.

You will probably simplify the number of courses so that food will not be served merely to dress up a table. You have a responsibility to see that the menu is planned toward national health rather than restaurant expediency. Each of you Restaurant Operators has an individual problem and an individual decision to make.

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